

Printed in China

# Friends Medical Missions in China



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By ISABELLA DeVOL

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Woman's Missionary Union of Friends,  
in America

Department of Literature

2137 Park Avenue

Indianapolis, Ind.

## FRIENDS MEDICAL MISSIONS IN CHINA.

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**O**NE of the striking things about our Lord's life upon earth was its adaptability to the needs of suffering humanity. This adaptability continues to characterize the activities of the of the followers of Him who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil.

Medical Missions have for their object, the healing of the body and life for the soul. Sometime ago a Chinese woman physician was asked why she had decided to study medicine. Her answer, seemed to the writer, to cover the purpose of medical missions in a very satisfactory manner.

She said that her father had been connected with a hospital and she observed that people came to him with their troubles, as well as their diseases, and that they seemed to go away feeling comforted; and then she added, "Of course, the object of every Christian in taking up the medical profession, is to lead people to Christ." In other words—*healing, comfort and salvation*. It was with this vision that American Friends took up medical work in China.

Their first hospital was erected at Nanking in 1896 under the management of Dr. Lucy A. Gaynor. It is the only mission hospital exclusively for women and children in Nanking. It provides accommodations for about forty patients. There is a large ward for women, a smaller one for children and a number of private rooms.

In the early years the calls were mostly for help among the poor and those in desperate need, but as time went on, Dr. Gaynor's skill and large-hearted sympathy drew about her women and children of

all classes. Dr. Gaynor was a woman of vision. Years ago, she saw the splendid possibility of gaining Chinese young women as nurses. She saw the need of them in the mission hospitals and in the Chinese and foreign homes. She was a woman of action as well as of vision and she gathered about her a class of girls, assuming the responsibility for their training and support. A plain building was erected by Dr. Gaynor with accommodations for twenty students. Upon her initiative the management of the school was taken over by a Board of Directors representing the six missions in Nanking. At the time of her death there were eighteen nurses in the school.

It was pathetic to see their deep grief as they mourned their teacher and friend. Dr. William E. Maeklin of the Foreign Christian Mission, Nanking, paid the following tribute to Dr. Gaynor as a physician :

"I can hardly realize that my friend and co-laborer, Dr. Gaynor, has gone to her reward. I do not know how we can get along without her. We shall miss her jovial, cheerful comradeship and her effective enthusiasm. We are largely forgetting sectarian differences in Nanking and are hoping to work shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy and for the good of all. In our co-operation we shall sadly miss Dr. Gaynor. We had a good division of service. She cared for the peculiar needs of the women and left us free for the general work and that among the men. She has saved many lives among the women and given much comfort. She was peculiarly well fitted for her chosen work. \* \* \*

"Years ago there was an awful epidemic of cholera in Nanking. All the men doctors were away and Dr. Gaynor alone organized a campaign of relief. I came down from the hill and assisted her. We posted the city with placards showing the cause of cholera and the preventative and curative measures to be used. Medicine was distributed at all chapels and dispensaries. In all, medicine was given to about 50,000 persons. \* \* \* She was called to the homes of rich as well as poor and all were treated with equal kindness. The daughter of the Viceroy Twan Fang was in a serious condition. She was called and relieved the cases. Several hundred dollars worth of valuable silks were given as a present. The doctor sold them and used the money in the hospital and nurse school. \* \* \*

"When Nanking was taken by the Revolutionists, the Tartars were looted and their houses destroyed. In spite of over-work in hospital and nurse school she threw herself into relief work, running a hospital, dispensary and industrial relief work for Tartars and poor Chinese. She gave her life for others as did the Master. She caught typhus fever from a patient and died a heroine of the mission field."

It was in answer to prayer that Dr. Liyin Tsao came to take up the work in the hospital and nurse school in the fall of 1912. Dr. Tsao is a graduate of The Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania. She was not only very much beloved and respected on account of her gracious manner and ability as a physician, but filled a large place in the mission activities in the city of Nanking.

In the summer of 1918 she went to Tientsin to take charge of a large government hospital. With the leaving of Dr. Tsao, the nurse school was closed.

Dr. Djang, who has been connected with the hospital work for the past seventeen years, has had charge of the work since Dr. Tsao left. Her long experience and devotion to the work gives her a willing mind to carry a responsibility that is really beyond her physical strength. Esther H. Butler, the superintendent of the mission, helps in the general management. A staff of nurses do much to make it possible to keep the hospital open. One nurse spends much of her time in the homes of the patients as nurse and evangelist. Dr. Isabella De Vol was appointed to the Nanking hospital but she is at present in America on a health furlough.

About twenty-five miles distant from Nanking, north of the Yangste River, is situated the city of Luho. In the winter of 1897-98 to this city, with a population of some 30,000, Dr. Gaynor and Margaret Holme made frequent trips, seeing the sick and preaching the gospel. Dr. Gaynor saw a great opening for medical work in this city with its large surrounding country district without any foreign hospital or physician. In 1901 Drs. George and Isabella De Vol were appointed to this work. Living in a Chinese house, one of the rooms on the street was used as dispensary.

The people were superstitious and suspicious and even the simplest operations were found to be dangerous because bandages were opened and wounds examined by the patients. Some kind of a hospital was imperative. A Chinese house was rented and furnished in a temporary way with beds of boards laid on wooden benches. The surroundings were not favorable but with the blessing of the Lord, help and hope came to many patients. When the

doctors returned to America on their first furlough in 1904, the need of a new hospital was presented and in response funds were received which made it possible to buy additional land and erect a plain but serviceable building with a capacity of forty beds. Later on through the gifts of kind friends a small plot of land was leased and, with the aid of famine refugee labor, an inexpensive but much needed isolation ward was erected. At the time of the second furlough in 1913 the work had grown until the capacity of the hospital was often overtaxed. Funds were given to provide for additional accommodations and the extension was just ready for use as Dr. De Vol was taken ill. It provided more room for women and children, a better operating room and more convenient quarters for treating the dispensary patients.

Medical work in an interior city in China is carried on under very different conditions from those which exist in a hospital at home. The hospital at Luho is the only one in the country. The building is mostly lighted by lanterns. There is no telephone, no heating plant, no plumbing for hot and cold water, nor even a pump. Water is drawn and carried by hand. The city does not have a foreign drug store so that the supplies have to be arranged for and the dispensing attended to at the hospital. The patients do not come in ambulances, automobiles, or on street cars. Many walk a distance of ten or fifteen miles. Some ride on donkeys or wheelbarrows; others are carried by men on bamboo beds. The children are sometimes brought in baskets on a carrying pole. The basket at the other end of the pole may be balanced by a stone, a pig, or some other convenient weight. The well-to-do

often are carried in a bamboo chair. The usual routine of the hospital has been to begin the day with morning prayers, conducted in the hospital chapel. The audience is made up of the medical staff and employees, evangelistic workers and convalescent patients. After the morning prayer the physician in charge visits the wards giving orders for the day. Later in forenoon the medical assistants and hospital evangelist meet the physician at the dispensary and after a chorus and prayer, the patients who have been gathering for an hour or more in the chapel and have had the opportunity of listening to a simple gospel message are admitted one by one in the order of their arrival. A card system has proved very helpful not only in classifying patients as to their diseases but in locating the patients so that evangelists and Bible women can more easily continue the work which has been begun in the hospital.

We have found the bedside work in the hospital a very effective way of doing evangelistic work. It was a great joy to Dr. De Vol to meet with the workers on Saturday evenings and make a record of those who had shown a definite interest in the gospel during the week.

In December, 1917, at a time when the work seemed unusually full of promise, Dr. De Vol was taken ill and was called from his work on earth to a higher service. What his going meant to those to whom he had ministered for so many years can not be portrayed on paper. His first concern had been that the work of the hospitals should count as a force in the salvation of souls, but he was interested not only in the practice but the teaching of medicine and generally had students about him.



His care for the patients did not cease when they left the hospital. His interests were many but they centered in the cross. His activities were various but his aim was to bring men to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus and the power of His resurrection.

The hospital at present is under the administrative direction of Margaret A. Holme. The medical work is in charge of Dr. Liu Bao long, who graduated at the Peking Union Medical College in 1918. As a boy he was educated in our Boys' Boarding School. He spent some time in the hospital at Luho, as a medical student and assistant of Dr. George F. De Vol's, before going to Peking. Upon his return to Luho, he was warmly welcomed by the Chinese. His ability is appreciated by both Chinese and foreigners.

The other members of the staff are mostly those who have been in the hospital for a number of years. Esther H. Buller reports that together they have succeeded in tremendously relieving the medical situation at Luho.

May this sketch of the American Friends medical work in China be a call to prayer to those who read it.

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